

**Burns, Vanessa**

---

**From:** Cheryl Carpio [ccarpio43@aol.com]

**Sent:** Monday, February 28, 2011 12:51 PM

**To:** AppropriationTestimony

**Subject:** Re: Testimony opposing cuts to Department of Children and Families Juvenile Parole Staff

To: Appropriations Committee

My name is Cheryl Carpio; I am an active voter, home owner and life-long resident of the State of Connecticut. I reside in LowerFairfield County and cover this area in my job capacity as a Juvenile Parole Officer, working with some of the most dangerous and challenging youth and there families. I have been employed by the State of Connecticut, Department of Children and Families for 14 and one half - years, the past 10 and one half-years as a Juvenile Parole Officer. Prior to coming to work at DCF, I worked at several Maximum Security Prisons in the state of CT as a Correctional Counselor. I am a certified Addiction Counselor and licensed by the state of CT as an LADC.

I would like to thank you for reading my testimonial and allowing me the opportunity to partake in this principle process of democracy. My testimonial is inopposition of DCF's budget proposal to reduce Juvenile Parole staff with the elimination of 22 positions. The budget proposal is located in Governor Malloy's Budget Summary under the Department of Children and Families, on page B-140 "Recommended significant changes".

The proposal to reduce 22 Parole staff proves to be fiscally short sighted. While other agencies are examining approaches to best meet the needs of the incoming "Raise the Age" population in the best manner, DCF has decided to reduce its direct care Juvenile Parole staff by over half. I, for one, have never been more appalled and disappointed in a system that I have seen grow to become more therapeutic and successful in its approach to serving its youth and families. Should this drastic cut to over half our department occur, the youths and there families will suffer. This population requires significant attention in order to effectuate change to become productive in society, but with over half of our department gone, the process will revert back to the stone-age of just putting out fires, instead of building communities.

The Division of Juvenile Parole is currently comprised of 48 total staff, 9 Parole Supervisors and 39 Parole Officers. 3 Parole Supervisors and 3 Parole Officers will retire by July 2011. 2 parole Officers do not carry a caseload; and are assigned to theConnecticut Juvenile Training School in the capacity of the Intake and Parole Review Board. This would leave 12 Juvenile Parole Officers to cover the entire state of CT and 6 Parole Supervisors to

2/28/2011



cover the entire state of CT. Leaving a total department of 20. This would right now leave each parole officer with 30 cases and with the "Raise the Age" the caseloads would climb 2 a month continually after July, judging from current statistics with no relief in sight; projecting each parole Officer will have a caseload of 42 by December 2012.

It is my belief that if passed, this proposed budget will threaten the gains Connecticut has made in the juvenile justice system. Connecticut has proven in the last few years; that by concentrating its resources on high-risk youth and providing comprehensive community wrap-around services, recidivism rates have decreased. These results are what fueled the "Raise the Age" legislation in hopes of keeping youth out of the adult system. The truth of the matter is, front-line workers are aware of what some management have failed to realize - - Human Services and Public safety is about helping, protecting and serving the public. When it comes to treating juvenile delinquency to succeed, the youth and families deserve an individualized plan based on their strength and needs.

Research supports loweryouth-to-staff ratios will enable increased individual attention, which allows the worker to focus on the youth and families, to maximize their potential to succeed. If the DCF proposed budget was to go into effect as proposed, current statistical information captures the youth to staff ratio at 30:1 prior to the next "Raise the Age" implementation phase slated for July 2012. With the anticipated increase of 17 year old youth to the juvenile system, youth to staff ratios will substantially increase. Thus, Juvenile Parole staff would be forced to become crisis driven and revert back to being reactive.

DCF's proposed staff reduction will prove to be a bad idea for youth and their families, community providers, and public safety. Further, as it will increase costs to the tax payers. Youth and there families will not receive best case practices, or differential responses in care as staff will be spread thin throughout the state. Families and Community providers will not receive the needed support they have become accustomed to from Juvenile Parole. Public safety may also be compromised, as staff will not be able to provide the levels of supervision needed to support the youth and families to abstain from the criminal activities, and elevate themselves from criminal entrenchment. A decrease in staff will make it difficult to maintain youth in the community. As a result, more youth will be transitioned into out of the home, congregate care settings, resulting in increased spending. It is currently estimated that is costs \$33 per day for a youth to be maintained in the community. It costs \$350-\$560 per day for in-state residential treatment centers, and \$774 per day at theConnecticut Juvenile Training School per youth. From past experience as Juvenile Parole Officer over 10 years ago with a caseload of 40, that the amount of overtime needed due to the reduced staffing, will sky-rocket because this population requires to apprehension, court transports, facility disruptions and removals, and placements of youth in out-of-state facilities because there are no in-state facilities to meet the needs of this challenged population.



Once again, thank you for your time. I ask that you please examine DCF's budget proposal, analyze its lack of fiscal responsibility and its lack of commitment to promoting best practice principles in improving Connecticut's Juvenile Justice System. I welcome the opportunity to speak with you further regarding my concerns and the proposed budget.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Carpio LADC D.C.F. Juvenile Parole Officer

[ccarpio43@aol.com](mailto:ccarpio43@aol.com)

Home: 203-956-6030

Mobile: 203-451-8743

